

Right in our own backyard here in the nation's capital, the Washington Blue Cross plan recently merged with the Maryland plan headquartered in Baltimore. This followed passage of HR 3025 at the end of the last session of Congress, facilitating the merger by amending the Federal charter of the DC Blues, which is the only Blue Cross plan nationwide to have been chartered by Congress rather than by a state. The merger is being challenged in two court actions brought by the Blue Cross policyholders and by a national patient advocacy foundation, who claim that the merger involves an illegal shift in control of charitable assets away from the intended beneficiaries. Lawyers for Blue Cross are citing congressional action on HR 3025 as a defense in the lawsuits.

While HR 3025 modified the DC Blues' charter to change its provisions for membership, the legislation was silent on all issues involving the plan's charitable and benevolent status and the charitable nature of assets. A review of the last minute consideration of this legislation in November 1997 that Congress took no action to diminish the charitable status of the Blues plan, nor did Congress contemplate the effect of HR 3025 on the DC Blues' obligations arising from its charitable status.

HONORING LAURA BERMAN

**HON. ROBERT A. WEYGAND**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor a young Rhode Island student from my district who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in her community. Laura Berman of North Kingstown has just been named one of my state's top honorees in the 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state.

Ms. Berman is being recognized for creating a library awareness program for third graders in her community of North Kingstown. Laura had read about a project in the New York City school system and decided to base her program on that. Working with a fellow volunteer, the local library system, and the elementary school teachers, Laura designed a classroom presentation that would impress upon children the joys of reading and the activities offered by the public library. Laura also distributed personal library cards to every child, along with a t-shirt purchased with donations that read, "Your library card . . . don't leave home without it!" The program was so successful that Laura has recruited additional volunteer help and plans to offer it at two more elementary schools this year.

In addition to Ms. Berman, I am pleased to tell you that there were four Distinguished Finalists. Ryan Arruda of Wickford Middle School in North Kingstown initiated a program to collect recyclable aluminum cans to benefit the local food pantry. Mariah Northrop also of Wickford Middle School participates in "Make a Difference Day" to clean up her community. Janaina Stanley of North Kingstown High School started a program called Breaking Down Barriers to prevent racism, prejudice

and hostility in her community. Finally, Erin Conti or Warwick Veterans Memorial High School volunteers as a "buddy" on a baseball team for physical and mentally challenged children.

All of these students should be very proud of themselves for having been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. I heartily applaud each and every one of them for his or her initiative in seeking to make Rhode Island a better place to live, and for the positive impact they have made on the lives of others. Each one has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Their actions show that young people can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

IN TRIBUTE TO DR. WILLYS  
FRANCIS MUELLER, JR.

**HON. DALE E. KILDEE**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to recognize a most distinguished member of our community, Dr. Willys Francis Mueller, Jr., of Flint, Michigan. After devoting 33 years of his life to the medical profession, Dr. Mueller has decided to retire from his position as Chairman of the Department of Pathology at Hurley Medical Center in Flint. Throughout his many years of dedicated service, Dr. Mueller has worked as an honorable physician, a selfless civic volunteer and a devoted family man.

Dr. Mueller attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and graduated with a degree in pre-med. He continued his education at U of M, and received his Medical Degree in June of 1959. To complete his education, Dr. Mueller did his internship and residency, and later became certified in pathologic anatomy, and clinical and forensic pathology. In September 1966, Dr. Mueller joined the United States Army and became Captain of Medical Corps Assignments. He served as a Staff Pathologist and as a Chief of the Accident Pathology Branch in the Military Environmental Division at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

As a member of various medical organizations, Dr. Mueller has made immeasurable contributions to the lives of people throughout the State. He is a member of the Michigan Association of Blood Banks, the Michigan State Medical Society and the Michigan Association of Medical Examiners, to name just a few. He has served as a Clinical and Adjunct Professor at Michigan State University, Northern Michigan University and Michigan Technical University.

Dr. Mueller's work as a physician is only to be outdone by his involvement in several civic organizations. These include the American Red Cross, The Hurley Clinic, St. John Catholic Church and Delta College. Also, he has been involved in numerous speaking engagements at local high school career days and service clubs.

Mr. Speaker, Willys Mueller's spirit of volunteerism combined with his lifetime commit-

ment to healing makes him truly worthy of praise and recognition. It is indeed a pleasure to stand in front of this House and speak of Dr. Willy's Francis Mueller, who through his thoughts, deeds, and actions has provided the community with an invaluable resource and an indomitable spirit. The City of Flint is a better place because of Dr. Mueller's selfless service to humanity. Our community owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude. We wish him well in all his future endeavors.

MARY ANN KIRK, "MARYLAND  
AMERICAN MOTHER"

**HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Maryland's 1997 "Maryland American Mother," Mary Ann Kirk. A resident of Rockville, Md., and my constituent, Mrs. Kirk was honored last year for her devotion to her wonderful family and for her tireless efforts as a community volunteer. Mrs. Kirk has been active in promoting character and citizenship education in Maryland's schools. She has long been an active volunteer with the American Heart Association and with area school tutoring programs. In all her activities, she underscores the important roles of mothers in shaping our society.

The "Maryland American Mother of the Year" is sponsored by American Mothers, Inc., an organization founded in 1933 to strengthen the home and family and to provide support to mothers in a sometimes troubling, always challenging, world. AMI, the official sponsor of Mothers' Day, provides outreach programs that include parenting workshops, tutoring and literacy programs, providing clothing and shelter for needy families.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me in saluting Mary Anne Kirk, who by her contributions to her own family and to her state and community, richly deserves the title "Maryland American Mother of the Year." She truly makes a difference.

TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY SEELEY,  
SOUTHSIDE ADVANCEMENT AS-  
SOCIATIONS' WOMAN OF THE  
YEAR

**HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Mrs. Dorothy Seeley, who will be honored Sunday, February 22, 1998, as the Woman of the Year by the Council of South Side Advancement Associations, Incorporated, of Milwaukee.

The Council of South Side Advancement Associations is a network comprised of delegates from south side Milwaukee veterans, scholarship, business, civic and senior citizen organizations. Its members, from many diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds come together in a coalition to educate themselves on local matters, to provide support to each other and address issues involving the South Side community.

In this spirit, the Council will celebrate its 51st annual Lincoln Day Banquet on February 22nd and will honor my long time friend and supporter, and senior citizen advocate extraordinaire, Mrs. Dorothy Seeley.

Dorothy has a well-earned reputation around the Milwaukee area and our entire state as a real go-getter and fighter for the rights of our senior citizens. From her years at Nordberg Manufacturing Company as a crane operator, to her union steward days, right on through her appointments by Wisconsin Governor John Reynolds and Milwaukee County Executive John Doyle, Dorothy has been a friend of working men and women and retirees. To this day, as President of United Seniors of Wisconsin, Dorothy pursues the never-ending battle to protect the rights of seniors, so that their voices can be heard here at home in Milwaukee, in Madison at the State Capitol and in Washington, D.C.

In 1990, Dorothy was given the prestigious honor of being named one of Wisconsin's Ten Most Admired Senior Citizens by Security Savings at an awards ceremony during the Wisconsin State Fair.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I ask that you join me in congratulating Mrs. Dorothy Seeley on a job well done. Keep up the great work, Dorothy, for many years to come. May God Bless.

#### INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 3161— TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF ACT

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on February 4th, I joined my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Congressman CHRISTOPHER SMITH, in introducing H.R. 3161, the Torture Victims Relief Act. Together, the two of us introduced similar legislation during the 104th Congress.

Our important legislation attempts to deal with the detrimental consequences of the most egregious form of violation of international human rights—the widespread use of torture. Human rights experts estimate that there are over 79 countries around the world where torture is practiced on a systematic basis. As a consequence, there are currently an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 victims of foreign governmental torture in the United States, who are in dire need of qualified psychological and medical treatment in adequate facilities. The traumatic experiences of torture—which according to experts in most cases does not ultimately aim to obtain information, but simply to break and destroy the victim's personality and human identity—result in continuous nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks, and deep depressions.

In 1973, Amnesty International appealed to the world medical profession to respond to the international use of torture and to develop a multi-pronged treatment program to counter the severe effects of torture. These efforts—in particular under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Inge Genefke, MD, DMSc.h.c.—resulted in the establishment of the first Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1982. This international movement has now grown to encompass 173 centers in 76 countries. The suc-

cessful work of these centers—based on four parallel pillars consisting of psychotherapy, physiotherapy, social counseling and nursing—have shown that with adequate treatment, torture victims can resume productive and fulfilling lives.

Mr. Speaker, since torture is used by the most despicable of totalitarian oppressors around the world as one of their most common techniques for suppressing freedom of speech and democratic rights, it typically targets the strongest and most outstanding defenders of these democratic values in foreign countries. The United States has courageously defended and promoted the values of freedom and democracy around the world, the very principles on which this country was founded. The victims of torture are these courageous people who, knowing full well the risk of physical and psychological harm which will inevitably come to them if they are arrested, uphold our common values in the face of their brutal oppressors.

Mr. Speaker, these heroic defenders of human rights and human liberty deserve our strongest support. The Torture Victims Relief Act (H.R. 3161) will fully implement the provisions of the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which prohibits the involuntary return of any person to a country if there is substantial evidence that a reasonable person in those circumstances would fear subjection to torture.

President Ronald Reagan signed the U.N. Convention on April 18, 1988, and the United States Senate ratified it on 21 October, 1994. With the ratification of this convention, these international norms became binding law in the United States. There is no domestic legislation, however, to implement these international legal provisions. Our legislation will rectify this oversight by providing the legal provisions necessary to implement the Convention on Torture.

Furthermore, our important bill will make important changes in the immigration procedures under which torture victims will be handled. The provisions of this bill expedite the processing for asylum applicants who make credible claims that they have been victims of torture. The legislation establishes the presumption that such applicants should not be detained while their asylum case is pending, and it designates refugees who are torture victims as refugees of special humanitarian concern with priority for resettlement at least as high as that given to any other refugee group.

In addition, the Torture Victims Relief Act provides for special training for officials who are involved in implementing immigration procedures. This training will provide information about torture and its long-term effects, and this will help these officials to consider the special physical and psychological circumstances a torture victim has to endure when they have to provide evidence in support of their asylum claim.

In order to ensure an adequate rehabilitation treatment for victims of torture, this bill authorizes \$5 million for FY 1999 and \$7.5 million for FY 2000 from funds authorized for the Department of Health and Human Services to support domestic torture treatment programs. In addition, the bill fully supports the international efforts I have outlined above. It authorizes \$5 million for FY 1999 and \$7.5 million for FY 2000 of funds authorized under the Foreign

Assistance Act for international rehabilitation services, and it authorizes \$3 million for FY 1999 and \$3 million for FY 2000 of funds authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims.

In a further effort to strengthen the international effort to address the scourge of torture, our legislation commits the United States to use its voice and vote in the United Nations to support the investigation and elimination of practices outlawed under the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

#### COMMENDING THE HEROISM OF CUB SCOUT WILLEM REYNAR

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a brave and outstanding young American, Cub Scout Willem Reynar of Cub Scout Pack 440.

Willem Reynar is the epitome of a good Cub Scout, possessing courage and bravery beyond his years. In September 1997, Willem was able to think clearly and act quickly when he found his younger sister in a drowning situation. Willem didn't panic and in turn saved his sister's life.

I commend Willem Reynar for his courage and heroism. According to the great American author Mark Twain, "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear." Willem Reynar was able to conquer his fear and save the life of another human being.

Willem Reynar's bravery is an example to his Pack and to us all. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in commending Cub Scout Willem Reynar, a hero who truly deserves the Boy Scout Lifesaving Award.

#### BOB ADAMS: AN AMERICAN HERO

**HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 1998*

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a friend, a role model and a hero in the black community. This man believes in the four values which have made America great. Those values are hard work, integrity, faith in God and persistence. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a successful black businessman who overcame dire circumstances to realize the American Dream.

Indeed, my good friend Bob Adams is the personification of the American Dream. Here is a man who was born into poverty and who understands what it feels like to go to bed with an empty belly, wake up with an empty belly, and then go to school and try to learn on an empty belly. There are millions of children in this country, Mr. Speaker, who have to endure the same horrible circumstances, but I am hopeful we can work in a bipartisan fashion in Congress to help end this suffering.